

TULL, M.

Appl. No. To be assigned

US National Phase of PCT/GB02/05789

July 6, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-11 have been canceled, without prejudice.

12.(new) In a wire command link between a launch platform and an underwater vehicle, the wire comprising an optical cable or microcable, a splice chamber through which the wire passes in a longitudinal direction between the launch platform and underwater vehicle, and the splice chamber including:

a storage chamber for accommodating and protecting a splice and excess wire, the storage chamber comprising first and second separable portions, and

coupling means both for releasably joining the first and second portions along a line in said longitudinal direction and for releasably coupling the storage chamber between the launch platform and the underwater vehicle,

the arrangement being such that in use when the launch platform and underwater vehicle move apart, forces created in said coupling means cause release and separation of the first and second portions to permit deployment in a controlled manner of the splice and excess wire.

13.(new) A splice chamber for use in a wire link between a launch platform and an underwater vehicle, the wire comprising an optical cable or microcable,

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the splice chamber being such as to permit wire to pass in a longitudinal direction between the launch platform and underwater vehicle, and the splice chamber including:

a storage chamber for accommodating and protecting a splice and excess wire, the storage chamber comprising first and second separable portions, and

coupling means both for releasably joining the first and second portions along a line in said longitudinal direction and for releasably coupling the storage chamber between the launch platform and the underwater vehicle,

the arrangement being such that in use when the launch platform and underwater vehicle move apart, forces created in said coupling means cause release and separation of the first and second portions to permit deployment in a controlled manner of the splice and excess wire.

14.(new) A chamber according to claim 12, wherein the storage chamber is shaped in generally circular form to control the bend radius of wire stored therein.

15.(new) A chamber according to claim 12, wherein the splice chamber includes first and second neck portions at respective first and second ends of said splice chamber in said longitudinal direction, through which wire passes in use.

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16.(new) A chamber according to claim 15, wherein said coupling means includes said second neck portion that is coupled to one end of a tubular housing means, the other end of the tubular housing means being adapted to be connected to a hosepipe.

17.(new) A chamber according to claim 15 wherein said coupling means includes a tubular member that is slidably mounted on the first neck portion and coupled thereto by frangible means.

18.(new) A chamber according to claim 12, wherein the said coupling means includes an active release device for ejecting said first and second portions from the wire therein.

19.(new) A chamber according to claim 18, wherein the active release device comprises a spring-loaded device.

20.(new) A chamber according to claim 12, wherein the coupling means includes a weak link.

21.(new) A chamber according to claim 20, wherein the weak link comprises a shear pin located in a retaining collar.